

CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CDF Declares Fire Season Statewide

Sacramento- The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) has declared the opening of wildland fire season statewide as of 8 a.m. Monday June 3, 2002. With this declaration comes a request for public cooperation. "We ask the people of California to help provide the defense and we'll provide the offense," says CDF Director Andrea Tuttle. "CDF will be there with fire fighters, fire engines and air tankers, but we need homeowners to provide that clearance around their property to make it defensible."

CDF provides the following fire prevention and life-saving tips:

Before the Fire:

- Clear flammable material away from structures at least 30 feet, but remember not to use power tools such as lawn mowers and chain saws during the heat of the day when they might send sparks into dry grass.
- Remove leaves, twigs, pine needles, etc. from the roof.
- Trim back tree branches at least 10 feet from the structure.
- Stay informed. Listen to local newscasts about nearby fire activity.
- Be prepared to evacuate if necessary. Collect valuable papers, medicines, pets, etc. so that you can grab them if you have to leave quickly.

If a wildfire is approaching:

- Listen to newscasts. If fire officials call for an evacuation please leave. No property is worth your life.
- Park your car facing out for a quick exit. Put your valuables in the car and leave the key where you can get to it quickly.
- Close shutters and heavy drapes. They can block radiant heat.
- Take down shear curtains which might combust.
- Leave the doors to your house unlocked. This allows firefighters a better chance to save your home.
- Leave your lights on, making your home more visible through smoke.
- Place a garden hose and buckets of water around your home. Firefighters may use them to douse spot fires.
- Put a ladder up against your roof. This makes it easier for firefighters to put out small fires on the roof.
- Cover up. Sparks will be flying. Wear long pants and long sleeves made of cotton. Goggles or wrap-around sun glasses can protect eyes.
- Cover your head with a cap.
- In heavy smoke, put a dry bandanna over your mouth and nose. Never wet it. You can steam your lungs.



-More-

- Follow emergency broadcast instructions.

If Surrounded by Fire:

In a Structure –

- Call 911 and give a good description of where you are.
- Close windows, shutters and heavy drapes.
- Turn off the air conditioning.
- Get into the portion of the structure farthest from the on-coming fire.
- A shower or bath tub may provide protection.
- After the fire passes over get out of the structure since it probably will be on fire.

In a vehicle-

- If you see an escape opportunity, drive quickly through the flames to safety.
- If you can't see a safe exit, stop the vehicle and put it in park.
- Leave the engine on. Keep pressing lightly on the accelerator to keep the engine running.
- Roll up windows.
- Stay in the vehicle – It is worse outside.
- Turn air conditioner off.
- Get on the floor.
- Cover yourself.
- Get out as soon as fire passes.
- The car won't explode but it may catch fire.

On foot-

- Look around for an escape route. Decide whether to shelter or run.
- Drop everything heavy.
- Get into a building or vehicle if possible.
- Radio or phone your location.
- Get into a rocky outcropping or body of water.
- Lie flat in a ditch and dig a hole in the dirt for your face.
- If there is no other choice, you might run through the flames to an area already burned. Immediately stop, drop and roll when you are past the flames.

Help the fire service fight arson:

- Watch for suspicious behavior.
- Note the physical description, clothing, and auto license number of any suspicious person.
- Make note of the time they were spotted in the area.
- Call local law enforcement or fire department with information.

More safety tips are available on the CDF website at www.fire.ca.gov

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